WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A network router comprising:

a processor;

a port operable for coupling the processor to a WAN;

a port operable for coupling the processor to a LAN;

a smart card reader coupled to the processor;

circuitry operable for reading data from a smart card inserted into the smart card reader, wherein the data includes information on how to dial up a data processing system over the WAN; and

circuitry operable for dialing up the data processing system over the WAN using the information.

2. The network router as recited in claim 1, wherein the data processing system is associated with an ISP, and wherein the information includes the phone number of the ISP.

3. The network router as recited in claim 2, wherein the data includes networking parameters read by the ISP to configure a connection between the router and the data processing system.

4. The network router as recited in claim 2, further comprising:

circuitry operable for receiving from the data processing system over the WAN configuration information; and

circuitry operable for writing the configuration information onto the smart card via the smart card reader.

5. The network router as recited in claim 4, wherein the configuration information includes a PPP user ID and password.

6. The network router as recited in claim 4, wherein the configuration information includes a local phone number for dialing up the ISP.

7. The network router as recited in claim 5, further comprising:

circuitry operable for permitting a plurality of computers coupled to the router via the LAN to access the ISP using the configuration information.

8. The network router as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

circuitry operable for establishing a connection between the router and the data processing system; and

circuitry operable for channeling the connection to a specified virtual private network.

9. The network router as recited in claim 8, further comprising:

circuitry operable for permitting access on the virtual private network only at a security level specified in the information on the smart card.

10. The network router as recited in claim 1, wherein the WAN is an Intranet.

11. The network router as recited in claim 10, further comprising:

circuitry operable for permitting access to the Intranet as a function of security information stored on the smart card.

12. A network router comprising:

a processing means;

means for coupling the processing means to a WAN;

means for coupling the processing means to a LAN;

means for reading and writing a smart card coupled to the processing means;

means for reading data from the smart card inserted into the smart card reading means, wherein the data includes information on how to dial up a data processing system over the WAN; and

means for dialing up the data processing system over the WAN using the information.

13. The network router as recited in claim 12, wherein the data processing system is associated with an ISP, and wherein the information includes the phone number of the ISP.

14. The network router as recited in claim 13, wherein the data includes networking parameters read by the ISP to configure a connection between the router and the data processing system.

15. The network router as recited in claim 13, further comprising:

means for receiving from the data processing system over the WAN configuration information; and

means for writing the configuration information onto the smart card via the smart card writing means.

16. The network router as recited in claim 15, wherein the configuration information includes a PPP user ID and password.

17. The network router as recited in claim 15, wherein the configuration information includes a local phone number for dialing up the ISP.

18. The network router as recited in claim 16, further comprising:

means for permitting a plurality of computers coupled to the router via the LAN to access the ISP using the configuration information.

19. The network router as recited in claim 12, further comprising:

means for establishing a connection between the router and the data processing system; and

means for channeling the connection to a specified virtual private network.

20. The network router as recited in claim 19, further comprising:

means for permitting access on the virtual private network only at a security level specified in the information on the smart card.

21. The network router as recited in claim 12, wherein the WAN is an Intranet.

22. The network router as recited in claim 21, further comprising:

means for permitting access to the Intranet as a function of security information stored on the smart card.

23. A method for using a network router comprising the steps of:

inserting a smart card into a smart card reader coupled to a processor in the router;

reading data from the smart card inserted into the smart card reader, wherein the data includes information on how to dial up a data processing system over a WAN; and

dialing up the data processing system over the WAN using the information.

24. The method as recited in claim 23, wherein the data processing system is associated with an ISP, and wherein the information includes the phone number of the ISP.

25. The method as recited in claim 24, wherein the data includes networking parameters read by the ISP to configure a connection between the router and the data processing system.

26. The method as recited in claim 24, further comprising the step of:

receiving configuration information from the data processing system over the WAN; and

writing the configuration information onto the smart card.

27. The method as recited in claim 26, wherein the configuration information includes a PTP user ID and password.

28. The method as recited in claim 26, wherein the configuration information includes a local phone number for dialing up the ISP.

29. The method as recited in claim 27, further comprising the step of:

permitting a plurality of computers coupled to the router via the LAN to access the ISP using the configuration information.

30. The method as recited in claim 23, further comprising the steps of:

establishing a connection between the router and the data processing system; and

channeling the connection to a specified virtual private network.

31. The method as recited in claim 30, further comprising the step of:

permitting access on the virtual private network only at a security level specified in the information on the smart card.

32. The method as recited in claim 23, wherein the WAN is an Intranet.

33. The method as recited in claim 32, further comprising the step of:

permitting access to the Intranet as a function of security information stored on the smart card.

34. A smart card adaptable for inserting into a smart card reader coupled to a processor in a network router, the smart card comprising data stored on the smart card that includes information usable by the network router on how to dial up a data processing system over a WAN.

35. The smart card as recited in claim 34, wherein the data processing system is associated with an ISP, and wherein the information includes the phone number of the ISP.

36. The smart card as recited in claim 35, wherein the data includes networking parameters read by the ISP to configure a connection between the router and the data processing system.

37. The smart card as recited in claim 35, further comprising circuitry operable for receiving and storing configuration information onto the smart card.

38. The smart card as recited in claim 37, wherein the configuration information includes a PPP user ID and password.

39. The smart card as recited in claim 37, wherein the configuration information includes a local phone number for dialing up the ISP.

40. The smart card as recited in claim 34, further comprising:

data stored on the smart card for establishing a connection between the router and the data processing system; and

data stored on the smart card for channeling the connection to a specified virtual private network.

41. The smart card as recited in claim 40, further comprising:

data stored on the smart card for permitting access on the virtual private network only at a security level specified in the information on the smart card.

42. The smart card as recited in claim 34, wherein the WAN is an Intranet.

43. The smart card as recited in claim 42, further comprising:

data stored on the smart card for permitting access to the Intranet as a function of security information stored on the smart card.